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(Original Signature of Member)

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 10, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Defense to carry out a program to provide a support system for members of the Armed Forces who incur severe disabilities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER (for himself and [see attached list of cosponsors]) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To amend title 10, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Defense to carry out a program to provide a support system for members of the Armed Forces who incur severe disabilities.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Disabled Veterans
5 Transition Assistance Act of 2004”.



1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

2 The purposes of this Act are—

3 (1) to honor the members of the Armed Forces
4 by ensuring that those members who are severely
5 disabled on or after September 11, 2001, while in
6 the military service and their family members receive
7 the assistance they need in undergoing the transition
8 from military to civilian life and from care provided
9 by the Department of Defense to care provided by
10 the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

11 (2) in order to carry out the purpose stated in
12 paragraph (1), to expand the scope of the the pro-
13 gram of the Army known as the Disabled Soldiers'
14 Support System to provide transition assistance as
15 described in paragraph (1) for all eligible severely
16 disabled members of the Army and to extend that
17 program to all branches of the Armed Forces.

18 **SEC. 3. ENHANCED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE FOR SE-**
19 **VERELY WOUNDED SERVICEMEMBERS.**

20 (a) DISABLED SERVICEMEMBER SUPPORT SYS-
21 TEM.—(1) Chapter 58 of title 10, United States Code, is
22 amended by adding at the end the following new section:

23 **“§ 1154. Support and transition assistance for mem-**
24 **bers with severe disabilities**

25 **“(a) DISABLED SERVICEMEMBER SUPPORT SYS-**
26 **TEM.—**The Secretary of Defense shall carry out a pro-

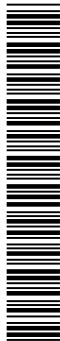


1 gram to provide a support system for members of the
2 armed forces who incur severe disabilities on or after Sep-
3 tember 11, 2001. The program shall include a system of
4 advocacy and follow-up with personal support to assist
5 those members as they transition from military service to
6 the civilian community.

7 “(b) EXECUTIVE AGENT.—The Secretary of Defense
8 shall designate an executive agent within the Department
9 of Defense to have the authority and responsibility to
10 carry out the program under this section throughout the
11 Department of Defense and, in cooperation with the Sec-
12 retary of Homeland Security, for members of the Coast
13 Guard with severe disabilities.

14 “(c) STAFFING.—As part of the program under sub-
15 section (a), the Secretary shall ensure that there are suffi-
16 cient personnel assigned to the program so that the the
17 ratio of severely disabled members or former members eli-
18 gible for the program at any time to the number of per-
19 sonnel assigned to the program with specific responsibility
20 for advocacy and follow-up for assigned members and
21 former members is not greater than 30:1.

22 “(d) SEVERE DISABILITIES.—The Secretary of De-
23 fense shall specify the degree and nature of disabilities
24 that are to be considered to be severe disabilities for the
25 purposes of this section.”.



1 (2) The table of sections at the beginning of such
2 chapter is amended by adding at the end the following
3 new item:

“1154. Support and transition assistance for members with severe disabilities.”.

4 (b) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Defense
5 shall prescribe regulations for the purposes of section
6 1154 of title 10, United States Code, as added by sub-
7 section (a), not later than 180 days after the date of the
8 enactment of this Act. The Secretary shall designate the
9 executive agent required by subsection (b) of that section
10 not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment
11 of this Act. Until such designation is made by the Sec-
12 retary , the executive agent shall be the Secretary of the
13 Army.

14 (c) INITIAL FUNDING.—For fiscal year 2005, the
15 Secretary of Defense shall transfer such funds as nec-
16 essary to provide funds for the implementation during that
17 fiscal year of the program required by that section.

